CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

‘Prevention is better than cure’ is an age old adage. This saying is of great significance today because mortality and morbidity due to chronic diseases is the order of the day. Life style, stress, temperament have emerged as the key variables in health while bacterial and infectious agents have taken a back seat. Therefore, focusing on health protective behavior and health promotion assume a lot of importance and more so in case of younger generation. Inculcating the right health protective behavior may go a long way in making these younger persons grow into healthy adults.

It was with this background in mind that present study was planned. The main aim was to identify different psychosocial factors associated with Health Protective Behavior in both the genders. Inferences drawn from this research may be used in suggesting guidelines for enhancing health promotion.

Some of the major findings of the present study are that Personality, Stress and Coping, Mental Health, Happiness, Parental child rearing styles and Perceived Social Support are clearly related with Health Protective Behavior. In the total sample, Positive state of Happiness, Mental Health, Perceived Social Support and tough-mindedness was associated with Health Protective Behavior. Emotion focused coping was found to be negatively related with Health Protective Behavior.

Clear cut gender differences emerged on correlates of Health Protective Behavior. Boys scored higher than girls on Health habits, Problem Focused Coping, Optimism, Health Locus of Control-Internal, Perceived Social Support, State-Anxiety, Perceived Family Environment dimension of Over-control, Psychoticism and Being Comfortable with
Others. Girls scored higher on Self-Esteem, Happiness state and Trait-Anxiety.

Though, the findings indicate a mixed type of gender connection, yet the boys have an edge over girls in having health oriented behavior. That’s why differential correlates of Health Protective Behavior have emerged for each of the genders. Among boys Self-Efficacy, Family Environment dimension of Over-Control, Mental Health were associated positively with Health Protective Behavior. Paradoxically Stress Symptoms were also associated positively with Health Protective Behavior in boys. Neuroticism was found to be negatively associated with Health Protective Behavior.

Among girls, Mental Health, Perceived Social Support, Hardiness, Self-Efficacy, Satisfaction with Life, Problem Focused Coping and Social desirability were associated with Health Protective Behavior. Externality, Extraversion, State-Anxiety and Self-Esteem were found to be negatively correlated with Health Protective Behavior.

Among boys, Total Mental Health was the strongest predictor of Health Protective Behavior. Among girls, Emotion Focused Coping, Happiness, Psychoticism, Extraversion and Over-protection emerged as significant predictors of Health Protective Behavior.

As the variance explained in Health Protective Behavior by the selected predictors is not very substantial, it could be concluded that some other variables could be influencing the health protective behavior. This implication suggests exploration of some other variables like extreme groups of socio-economic scale, urban-rural groups, health awareness profile and family values in future research.

However, the underlying current of this research and its inclusion of a large number of correlates of Health Protective Behavior highlight the need for training of the students in developing health orientation, health awareness and healthy life style even at the school level.